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Construction Industry News from City Hall

*Superintendent of Central Inspection
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Due to budget concerns throughout state and local governments, all City of Wichita Departments, including the Office Central Inspection, have been asked to reduce and monitor overtime very closely (with a target reduction of 50%.)

Much of the overtime costs for building and combination inspectors is caused by an abundance of inspections requested for the A.M., thus requiring inspectors to work through or into their lunch periods. Many times, upon arrival at an inspection site, the inspector is told that an A.M. inspection was not really necessary. ***Therefore, if there is no real need for an A.M. or P.M. inspection, we request that you please use the "Any Time" option on the TELUS System when requesting inspections.***

Please remember that the A.M. and P.M. time frames are only offered to inform the inspector of your preference of the time of day when the inspection will be made. We will continue to strive to meet these preferences. However, there may be occasions when an A.M. inspection must be carried over to the P.M., or in the worse case, when a P.M. inspection must be carried over to the next working day (inspectors will attempt to contact the contractor if and when this rarity occurs). Concrete inspections will still be made during the hour time slot requested on TELUS. Please try to coordinate your concrete inspection request with the time that you will actually be ready, since the same inspector may be trying to get to as many as four inspections that were scheduled for the same one hour window.

Inspections for after-hours, weekends and holidays can still be arranged by pre-paying (\$60.00) for the inspection by 3:00 P.M. of the regular work day on which the after hours inspection is requested, or by 3:00 P.M. of the regular working day prior to the weekend or holiday on which the inspection is requested.

Thank you for your continued cooperation on these matters.

Ray Sedge, Building Construction Inspection Supervisor

ELEVATOR CODE

Emergency Operation and Signaling Devices Installed in Elevator Cars.

The City of Wichita presently enforces the requirements of the A17.1-1996 Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators for all elevators, escalators, and related equipment that is installed, altered, repaired or maintained within the City.

This Code requires all elevators be provided with an audible signaling device and communication provisions for a two-way conversation to an accessible point outside the hoistway that is available to emergency personnel. Section **211.1** of this Code contains the requirements for emergency operation and signaling devices installed in elevator cars. It states in part:

Rule 211.1 Car Emergency Signaling Devices.

Elevators shall be provided with the following signaling devices:

211.1 (a) (1). An audible signaling device, operable from the emergency stop switch, and from a switch marked “ALARM” which is located in or adjacent to each car operating panel.

211.1 (a) (2). Means of two-way conversation between the car and a readily accessible point outside the hoistway which is available to emergency personnel (telephone, intercom, etc.). The means to activate the system does not have to be provided in the car.

211.1 (a) (3). If the audible signaling device(s), or the means of two-way conversation, or both, are normally connected to the building power supply, they shall automatically transfer to a source of standby or emergency power as required by the applicable building code after the normal power supply fails. The power source shall be capable of providing for the operation of the audible signaling device and illumination of the alarm switch for at least 1 hour, and the means of two-way conversation for at least 4 hours.

211.1 (b). In buildings in which a building attendant (building employee, watchman, etc.) is not continuously available to take action when the required emergency signal is operated, the elevators shall be provided with a means within the car for communicating with or signaling to a service which is capable of taking appropriate action when a building attendant is not available.

The intent of the requirements in Rule 211.1(a)(2) is that the telephone or intercom system be connected to a point where two-way conversation can be established by emergency personnel with the occupants of the car, assuring them that help is on the way. It must be located at a location that is readily accessible to emergency personnel and the exact location is determined on a local basis. The intent of this requirement is to help assure that emergency personnel have the ability to establish a communications link within the building to the car. The emergency signaling system is used to signal a problem and the communication system is then used to communicate with the occupants of the car, to help alleviate fears, prevent panic, and prevent dangerous attempts to exit the car without assistance.

In addition, requirements for emergency communications are found in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). These requirements address the needs of those with hearing and speech impairments, and states that “the emergency intercommunication system shall not require voice communication.” Therefore, each elevator car must have an ADAAG compliant “hands free” communication device (telephone, intercom, etc.). The use of a light indicating the call has been received and responded to, will provide a system that meets the intent of the hearing impaired. The light on the “hands free” communication panel should only be illuminated or blink when activated by the recipient of the call. Those who are blind will be able to hear that help is on the way.

Wayne L. Bolen, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Electrical/Elevator

Information on ADAAG "Detectable Warnings" for Curb Ramps, Walking Surfaces and Vehicular Ways

By Kansas state law, Kansas municipalities and local government building officials are required to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). "Detectable warnings" are an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement in the current ADAAG. Their purpose is for detecting the boundary between the sidewalk/walking surface and vehicular ways. ADAAG originally set forth requirements in 4.7.7 and 4.29 that curb ramp surfaces have a raised distinctive pattern of truncated domes to serve as a warning, detectable by cane or underfoot, to alert people with vision impairments of the transition to vehicular ways. This warning was required for curb ramps in the belief that their sloped surfaces removed the tactile cue provided by the straight drop off of a curb.

The original requirement in ADAAG 4.7.7 was suspended for a time to conduct further research. Research was conducted, and the suspension of the requirement was lifted on July 26, 2001, and detectable warnings are now required when constructing and altering curb ramps. *"Truncated domes" are the only detectable warnings allowed by ADAAG.* Grooves, exposed aggregate, and other similar designs intended for use as detectable warnings, *which have been a common installation practice in Wichita and many communities around the country,* are too similar to pavement textures, cracks and joints and are not considered equivalent ADA facilitation. Truncated domes are a unique design and have proven to be the most detectable surface.

Therefore, the "grooved" or "exposed aggregate" surfaces that have been typically used in Wichita on curb ramps are not considered ADA equivalent, and will therefore not comply with the current ADA requirements.

The above information/guidelines should now be considered and implemented when designing and installing curb ramps and walking surfaces that transition to or across vehicular areas. *This rule will apply to both ramps/walking surfaces on public rights-of-way and to construction projects on private property.*

Information and specifications on specific "truncated dome" designs (or possible design alternatives) and their placement have been outlined in proposed, new rulemaking for ADAAG and the Architectural Barriers Act, so this area is still quite dynamic. The Office of Central Inspection will try to assist you with any curb ramp/walking surface design questions to the extent feasible. Information may also be obtained by accessing the U.S. Access Board's web site at www.access-board.gov.

Kurt Schroeder

License Renewal Time

Starting September 1, 2003, the Office of Central Inspection will initiate and begin accepting license/certificate renewals for calendar year 2004. There are no increases in license or certificate fees for 2004. The license renewal forms will be mailed out on or about September 1st, and all license holders can renew their licenses through January 31st 2004 without any penalty. However, please be aware that after December 31st, no permits or inspections can be issued or performed for any contractor that has not renewed their contractor license for 2004. Also, please remember that all required general liability, automotive and workmen's compensation insurance must be up to date for a license to be renewed in an "active" status. At this time, OCI does not send out reminders to licensed contractors with respect to pending insurance expiration dates (insurance expiration dates often do not coincide with the 12/31 contractor license expiration dates), so always make sure that your insurance is current and on file with OCI.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Gary Cortner

PLUMBING AND DRAIN LAYING CONTRACTORS

When you schedule for a sewer inspection, the automated system gives you a choice of hours that includes an hour window, such as 1:00-2:00. If your inspection request is for 1:00-2:00, the sewer needs to be ready by 1:00 and the inspector will try to be there during that hour window. The one-hour window is so the inspector can fit this into his/her schedule.

COMMERCIAL DISHWASHER DRAINAGE CLARIFICATION BY BOARD OF APPEALS OF PLUMBERS AND GAS FITTERS.

Chapter 7, Section 704.3, under sanitary drainage reads, “Pot sinks, scullery sinks, dishwashing sinks, silverware sinks, commercial dishwashing machines, and other similar fixtures shall be connected to the drainage system.”

Table 7-3, Note #4 does not apply. Section 806.0 and Section 810.0 does not address commercial dishwashing machines. This interpretation is from the Board of Appeals and therefore, Chapter 7, Section 704.3 shall be enforced.

Phil Peterman, Plumbing and Mechanical Inspector

Development Assistance Center Customer Survey

Enclosed in this edition of CINCH you will find a “City of Wichita Development Assistance Center Customer Survey. One of the primary functions of the Development Assistance Center assist the development, design and building community through City processes, and to ensure timely and responsive service to the development community’s needs.

The City is very interested in your input, and will try as much as possible to incorporate your constructive remarks and suggestions to improve our operations and to make processes and workflow more customer friendly.



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